

What is claimed is:

1. An isolated polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- 5 a) an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:19, SEQ ID NO:20, SEQ ID NO:21, SEQ ID NO:23, SEQ ID NO:24, SEQ ID NO:25, SEQ ID NO:26, SEQ ID NO:27, and SEQ ID NO:28,
- 10 b) a naturally occurring amino acid sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:19, SEQ ID NO:20, SEQ ID NO:21, SEQ ID NO:23, SEQ ID NO:24, SEQ ID NO:25, SEQ ID NO:26, SEQ ID NO:27, and SEQ ID NO:28,
- 15 c) a biologically active fragment of an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:19, SEQ ID NO:20, SEQ ID NO:21, SEQ ID NO:23, SEQ ID NO:24, SEQ ID NO:25, SEQ ID NO:26, SEQ ID NO:27, and SEQ ID NO:28, and
- 20 d) an immunogenic fragment of an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:19, SEQ ID NO:20, SEQ ID NO:21, SEQ ID NO:23, SEQ ID NO:24, SEQ ID NO:25, SEQ ID NO:26, SEQ ID NO:27, and SEQ ID NO:28.

2. An isolated polypeptide of claim 1 selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:19, SEQ ID NO:20, SEQ ID NO:21, SEQ ID NO:23, SEQ ID NO:24, SEQ ID NO:25, SEQ ID NO:26, SEQ ID NO:27, and SEQ ID NO:28.

3. An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of claim 1.

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4. An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of claim 2.

5. An isolated polynucleotide of claim 4 selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:29, SEQ ID NO:30, SEQ ID NO:31, SEQ ID NO:32, SEQ ID NO:33, SEQ ID NO:34, SEQ ID NO:35, SEQ ID NO:37, SEQ ID NO:38, SEQ ID NO:41, SEQ ID NO:42, SEQ ID NO:43, SEQ ID NO:44, SEQ ID NO:45, SEQ ID NO:46, SEQ ID NO:47, SEQ ID NO:48, SEQ ID NO:49, SEQ ID NO:51, SEQ ID NO:52, SEQ ID NO:53, SEQ ID NO:54, SEQ ID NO:55, and SEQ ID NO:56.

6. A recombinant polynucleotide comprising a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide of claim 3.

7. A cell transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide of claim 6.

8. A transgenic organism comprising a recombinant polynucleotide of claim 6.

9. A method for producing a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) culturing a cell under conditions suitable for expression of the polypeptide, wherein said cell is transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide, and said recombinant polynucleotide comprises a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide of claim 1, and
- b) recovering the polypeptide so expressed.

10. An isolated antibody which specifically binds to a polypeptide of claim 1.

11. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:29, SEQ ID NO:30, SEQ ID NO:31, SEQ ID NO:32, SEQ ID NO:33, SEQ ID NO:34, SEQ ID NO:35, SEQ ID NO:37, SEQ ID NO:38, SEQ ID NO:41, SEQ ID NO:42, SEQ ID NO:43, SEQ ID NO:44, SEQ ID NO:45, SEQ ID NO:46, SEQ ID NO:47, SEQ ID NO:48, SEQ ID NO:49, SEQ ID NO:51, SEQ ID NO:52, SEQ ID NO:53, SEQ ID NO:54, SEQ ID NO:55, and SEQ ID NO:56,
- b) a naturally occurring polynucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:29, SEQ ID NO:30, SEQ ID NO:31, SEQ ID NO:32, SEQ ID NO:33, SEQ ID NO:34, SEQ ID NO:35, SEQ ID NO:37, SEQ ID NO:38, SEQ ID NO:41, SEQ ID NO:42, SEQ ID NO:43, SEQ ID NO:44, SEQ ID NO:45, SEQ ID

NO:46, SEQ ID NO:47, SEQ ID NO:48, SEQ ID NO:49, SEQ ID NO:51, SEQ ID NO:52, SEQ ID NO:53, SEQ ID NO:54, SEQ ID NO:55, and SEQ ID NO:56,

- c) a polynucleotide sequence complementary to a),
- d) a polynucleotide sequence complementary to b), and
- 5 e) an RNA equivalent of a)-d).

12. An isolated polynucleotide comprising at least 60 contiguous nucleotides of a polynucleotide of claim 11.

10 13. A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11, the method comprising:

- a) hybridizing the sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides comprising a sequence complementary to said target polynucleotide in the sample, and which probe specifically hybridizes to said target polynucleotide, under conditions whereby a hybridization
- 15 complex is formed between said probe and said target polynucleotide or fragments thereof, and
- b) detecting the presence or absence of said hybridization complex, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

20 14. A method of claim 13, wherein the probe comprises at least 60 contiguous nucleotides.

15 15. A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11, the method comprising:

- a) amplifying said target polynucleotide or fragment thereof using polymerase chain reaction amplification, and
- 25 b) detecting the presence or absence of said amplified target polynucleotide or fragment thereof, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

30 16. A composition comprising an effective amount of a polypeptide of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

17. A composition of claim 16, wherein the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:19, SEQ ID NO:20, SEQ ID NO:21, SEQ ID NO:23, SEQ ID NO:24, SEQ ID NO:25, SEQ ID NO:26, SEQ ID

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NO:27, and SEQ ID NO:28.

18. A method for treating a disease or condition associated with decreased expression of functional CDIFF, comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment the composition of claim 16.

19. A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an agonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting agonist activity in the sample.

20. A composition comprising an agonist compound identified by a method of claim 19 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

21. A method for treating a disease or condition associated with decreased expression of functional CDIFF, comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment a composition of claim 20.

22. A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an antagonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting antagonist activity in the sample.

23. A composition comprising an antagonist compound identified by a method of claim 22 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

24. A method for treating a disease or condition associated with overexpression of functional CDIFF, comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment a composition of claim 23.

25. A method of screening for a compound that specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 1, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) combining the polypeptide of claim 1 with at least one test compound under suitable conditions, and
- b) detecting binding of the polypeptide of claim 1 to the test compound, thereby identifying a compound that specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 1.

26. A method of screening for a compound that modulates the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1, said method comprising:

- a) combining the polypeptide of claim 1 with at least one test compound under conditions permissive for the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1,
- b) assessing the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the presence of the test compound, and
- c) comparing the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the presence of the test compound with the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the absence of the test compound, wherein a change in the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the presence of the test compound is indicative of a compound that modulates the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1.

27. A method for screening a compound for effectiveness in altering expression of a target polynucleotide, wherein said target polynucleotide comprises a sequence of claim 5, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising the target polynucleotide to a compound, and
- b) detecting altered expression of the target polynucleotide.

28. A method for assessing toxicity of a test compound, said method comprising:

- a) treating a biological sample containing nucleic acids with the test compound;
- b) hybridizing the nucleic acids of the treated biological sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides of a polynucleotide of claim 11 under conditions whereby a specific hybridization complex is formed between said probe and a target polynucleotide in the biological sample, said target polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11 or fragment thereof;
- c) quantifying the amount of hybridization complex; and
- d) comparing the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample with the amount of hybridization complex in an untreated biological sample, wherein a difference in the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample is indicative of toxicity of the test compound.

29. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:40 and SEQ ID NO:50.

30. A recombinant polynucleotide comprising a promoter sequence operably linked to a

polynucleotide of claim 29.

31. A cell transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide of claim 30.

5 32. A transgenic organism comprising a recombinant polynucleotide of claim 30.

33. A method for producing a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:12 and SEQ ID NO:22, the method comprising:

- 10 a) culturing the cell of claim 31 under conditions suitable for expression of the polypeptide, and
b) recovering the polypeptide so expressed.

34. A method for screening a compound for effectiveness in altering expression of a target polynucleotide, wherein said target polynucleotide comprises a sequence of claim 29, the method
15 comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising the target polynucleotide to a compound, and
b) detecting altered expression of the target polynucleotide.

35. A method for assessing toxicity of a test compound, said method comprising:

- 20 a) treating a biological sample containing nucleic acids with the test compound;
b) hybridizing the nucleic acids of the treated biological sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides of a polynucleotide of claim 29 under conditions whereby a specific hybridization complex is formed between said probe and a target polynucleotide in the biological sample, said target polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence of a polynucleotide of claim
25 29 or fragment thereof;
c) quantifying the amount of hybridization complex; and
d) comparing the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample with the amount of hybridization complex in an untreated biological sample, wherein a difference in the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample is indicative of toxicity of the test
30 compound.